

Guidelines for Accessibility Standard for Customer Service

June 2017



STATEMENT

River East Transcona School Division (RETSD) is committed to the *Accessibility for Manitobans Act* and its accessibility standards.

RETSD is committed to complying with The Accessibility Customer Service Standard under *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act*.

DEFINITIONS

Assistive Device - A technical aid, communication device or other instrument that is used to maintain or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities. Personal assistive devices are typically devices that persons with a disability bring with them such as a wheelchair, walker or a personal oxygen tank. Assistive devices may assist with hearing, vision, communicating, moving, breathing, remembering and/or reading.

Barrier - Anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability. This can include a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or practice (“obstacle”).

Disability - A disability is a condition that limits a person’s daily activities.

Service Animal - See the Manitoba Human Rights Commission Guidelines on Service Animals

Support Person - A support person means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies the individual in order to help with the communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or access to goods and services.

CUSTOMER SERVICES STANDARDS & GUIDELINES

Providing Accessible Goods, Services or Facilities

RETSD will make every reasonable effort to ensure that its policies, guidelines, practices and procedures are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity and equality of opportunity for people with disabilities.

Language and Terminology

RETSD is committed to using respectful language and terminology in our schools and workplaces as they pertain to various disabilities. It is everyone’s responsibility to keep up with current terminology.

USE . . .	INSTEAD OF . . .
Person with diabetes, arthritis, etc.	Afflicted with Suffers from
Person with a disability	The disabled, The handicapped
Person with a mental illness	Mentally ill, insane, crazy, psychotic

Person with a mental health issue	
Person who is hard of hearing Person who is deaf	The deaf
Person who is Deaf-Blind	Deaf and dumb, deaf mute
Person with Downs Syndrome Person with an intellectual disability Person with a developmental disability	Downs, imbecile, mentally retarded, mentally challenged
Person with epilepsy	An epileptic
Person who is blind Person who is visually impaired	The blind
Person who stutters Person with a communication disability	Stutterer, speech handicapped
Person with a mobility disability Person with a spinal cord injury	Physically challenged, crippled, lame,
Person who uses a wheelchair	Confined to a wheelchair, wheelchair bound
Accessible parking Accessible washrooms	Handicapped parking, handicapped washrooms
Person without a disability	Normal

If you are unsure of the proper terminology, ask the person.

COMMUNICATION

RETSD will communicate with people disabled by barriers in ways that take into account the nature of the barrier. This may include the following:

- easy to read fonts and plain language
- paper and pen available at reception
- all publications will include notice: “This publication is available in alternate formats upon request.”

RETSD will work with the person to determine the barrier and what method of communication works for them.

ASSISTIVE DEVICES

People with disabilities may use their personal assistive devices when accessing our facilities.

In cases where the assistive device presents significant and unavoidable health or safety concerns, other measures will be used to ensure the person with a disability can access our facilities.

The division will ensure that staff are aware of the various assistive devices that we provide to staff, students and the public to ensure access to our facilities.

SUPPORT PERSONS

A person with a disability is welcomed to be accompanied by a support person.

SERVICE ANIMALS

The division welcomes people with disabilities and their service animals into our facilities. Service animals are allowed on the parts of our premises that are open to the public.

When it is not easy to identify that an animal is a service animal and if appropriate, staff may ask:

1. Is the animal assisting you?
2. What assistance has the animal been trained to provide related to your disability?

If service animals are prohibited by another law, we will do the following to ensure people with disabilities can access our facilities:

- explain why the animal is excluded
- discuss with the person another way of providing access to the facilities

For further information, refer to RETSD Policy IMG – Animals in Schools.

MAINTAIN BARRIER-FREE ACCESS

The division will maintain barrier-free access by:

- keeping hallways, waiting areas and meeting rooms clear of clutter
- keeping entrance ways cleared of snow and ice
- ensuring the placement of standing signage is not a tripping hazard
- having space for mobility device in waiting room

NOTICE OF TEMPORARY DISRUPTION

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption of services or facilities for customers disabled by barriers, the division will promptly post notices and, when possible, announce the disruption. A clearly posted notice or announcement will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated length of time, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

Services/facilities include, but not limited to:

- accessible washroom
- elevator
- automatic doors
- accessible parking

The notice will be made available in one or more of the following ways:

- posted on school or division website

- posted at entrance
- announced on p.a. system

FEEDBACK PROCESS

The division welcomes feedback on how we provide accessible customer service. This feedback will help us identify barriers and respond to concerns.

Staff, students and the community may provide feedback in the following ways:

- email
- phone
- visit reception desk

All feedback, including complaints, will be directed to the appropriate department. Where applicable, responses will be provided in a timely manner.

TRAINING

The division will provide accessible customer service training to:

- all employees
- school board members

All staff will be trained on accessible customer service within 3 months after being hired.

Training will include:

- background and purpose of *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act*
- the requirements of the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service
- explanation of all policies relating to the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service
- how to interact and communicate with people disabled by barriers
- how to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
- what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing our goods, services or facilities
- staff will also be informed and/or trained when changes are made to our accessible customer service policies.

PUBLIC EVENTS

The division will make public events accessible by:

- announcing events in a manner that is accessible
- holding event(s) in accessible meeting places
- inviting requests for relevant disability accommodations

DOCUMENTATION

The division will document all policies, guidelines, practices and procedures for providing accessible customer service.

The division will inform staff, students and the community that these documents are available upon request.